

SIMPSON ROAD CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE



City of Atlanta
Bureau of Planning

Caram & Associates in conjunction with
Grice & Associates, Marketek Inc., Tunnell Spangler Walsh

DRAFT

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Chapter One Introduction

Executive Summary
Plan Update Background
Study Area
The String of Pearls Principle

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1. Executive Summary

The Simpson Road Corridor Redevelopment Plan Update builds upon several previous planning efforts in and around its vicinities, which include the previously adopted 1995 Simpson redevelopment Plan, the Beltline Redevelopment Plan, the Northside Drive Plan, and the Bankhead MARTA Station LCI. The Plan Update is intended to guide public and private decision-making and investment along the 4.2 mile long corridor over the next 25 years.

This Plan Update is the result of a collaborative process among residents, businesses, property owners, neighborhood organizations, the City of Atlanta, and other stakeholders. The planning team (Bureau of Planning and the Consultant team) held six public meeting to gather input, generate ideas, and review draft concept and recommendations.

At the early stage of the planning process, the planning team conducted comprehensive analysis of land use, zoning, urban design, transportation, and market potential along the Simpson Corridor, with the help from study participants. Findings from these analyses show that the area's poor image is related to the abundance of abandoned and underutilized buildings and perception of higher than average crime, as well as the high concentration of below-market rate housing and lower income characteristics. The outlook for the next 10 years, however, suggests opportunity for a significant turnaround for the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods. The corridor and the area surrounding is expected to be able to accommodate 4,488 new residential units, 264,546 square feet of retail, and 60,000 to 80,000 square feet of office./industrial space over the next 10 years. Major transportation projects are already planned or underway totaling \$2.5 million.

Based on the information and the vision and goals developed with the stakeholders, recommendations are developed in the later stage

of the planning process coupled with sound professional planning. The basic approaches to the recommendations include:

- € Build upon and enhance the different characters at three different sections of Simpson corridor from West to east.
- € Balance the revitalization of Simpson corridor through thoughtful preservation and appropriate redevelopment.
- € Encourage an activity node development pattern based on historic or existing nodes.
- € Improving traffic operations and safety by focusing on more efficient utilization of existing pavement.
- € Making existing MARTA transit facilities more user-friendly and efficient.
- € Apply New Urbanism principles when appropriate.
- € Encourage the improvement of pedestrian environment through both redevelopment and transportation projects.
- € Promote economic development by utilizing existing resources.

The action plan supporting the recommendations includes changes to the 15-year land Use plan, changes to the existing zoning districts, and a series of transportation and open space projects. All these actions are prioritized and scheduled for implementation in different phases over the next 25 years. There are 29 transportation projects recommended totaling about \$22 M.

In general, the Plan is a visionary yet achievable blueprint for revitalizing the corridor in respect to its historic context and physical character. With time, the implementation of plan recommendations will transform the Simpson Corridor into a vibrant urban corridor with: highly accessible, continuous, tree-lined sidewalks; preserved single family neighborhoods and historic structures; neighborhood and community serving activity nodes; safe and smooth traffic flows; human scaled buildings; multiple housing options; and social diversity.

2. Plan Update Background

At the end of year 2004, Mayor Shirley Franklin unveiled the new Century Economic Development Plan, which identified six (6) Economic Development Priority (EDP) areas in the City of Atlanta. These areas include Donald L. Hallowell Pkwy., Simpson Road, Campbellton Road, Jonesboro Road, Memorial Drive, and Stadium neighborhoods. These are underserved areas in the City that needs collaborative efforts in terms of physical redevelopment and economic revitalization. The first step to achieving the New Century Economic Development Plan goals for the EDP areas is to having an up-to-date plan for each area through which the different City Departments and other public agencies can work together to facilitate and promote redevelopment and revitalization.

The previous Simpson Redevelopment Plan was adopted in 1995, which covers the area along Simpson from Northside Drive to Westlake Avenue. It is out-dated and did not include the full stretch

of the Simpson corridor. In this context, a comprehensive update is needed for the corridor from H. E. Holmes Drive to Northside Drive.

3. Study Area

Simpson Street/Road and its study area located in the northwest quadrant of Atlanta approximately two miles west of Atlanta's central Business District. It starts from H. E. Holmes Drive to the West and ends at Northside Drive to the east, totaling about 4.2 miles in length. It crosses NPU J, K, L and multiple neighborhoods in Council District 3. The primary study area includes all the properties abutting the

Simpson Street/Road in City of Atlanta

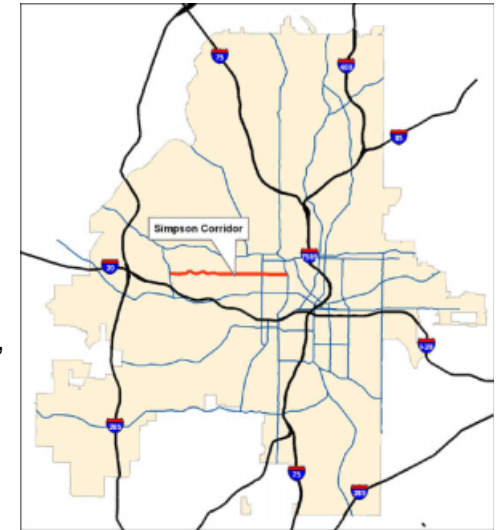
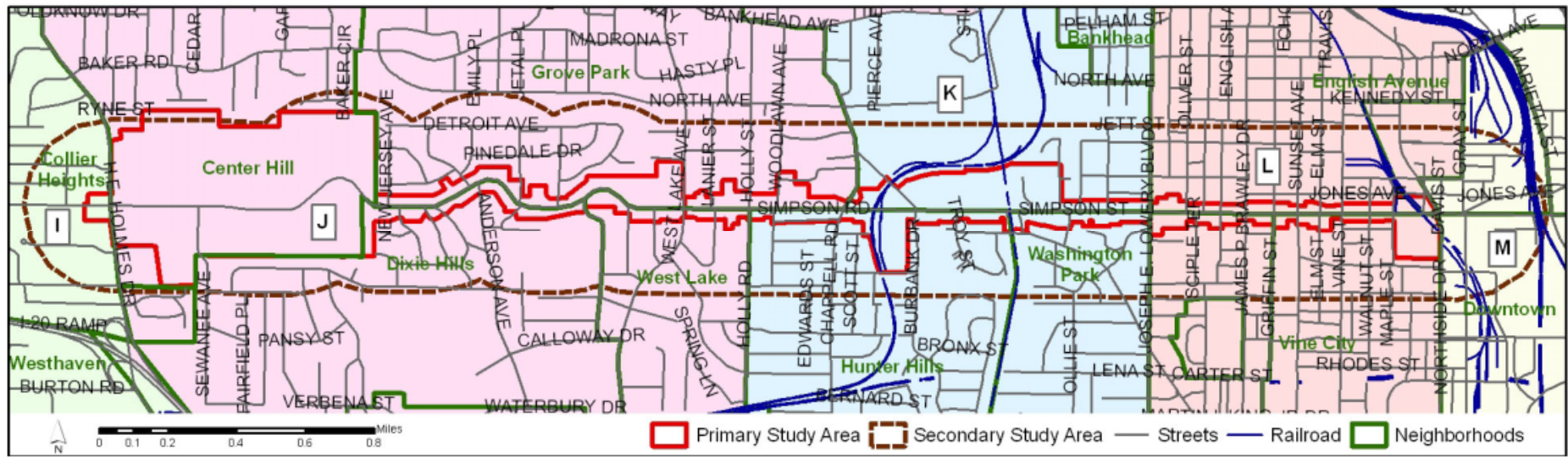


Figure 1. 1 Simpson Study Area



entire Simpson corridor. The secondary study area, which is also the area of influence is all properties within one-quarter mile from the centerline of Simpson Street/Road and located from the rear of the properties abutting Simpson. Recommendations are mainly focused on the primary area and only provided to the secondary area when appropriate (Figure 1.1).

4. The String of Pearls Principle

The general organizing principle that serves as the underlying guidelines of the redevelopment plan for the entire Simpson corridor can be envisioned as a String of Pearls, illustrated in Figure 1.2. The String of Pearls represents:

‘Pearls’ are different levels of activity nodes along the corridor that serve the neighborhoods and community. They are identified based on the historic and existing patterns of the corridor, which are areas around major street intersections (include H. E. Holmes Drive, New Jersey Ave., Anderson Ave., WestLake Ave., Joseph E. Lowery Blvd., and Northside Drive) and area with great redevelopment potential (the Beltline area).

The **‘String’** comprises of the continuous corridor area in between the activity nodes. They are area directed primarily for single-family preservation and infill. The streetscape and the physical thoroughfare itself serve to reinforce and support the connection between the ‘pearls’.

The String of the Pearls principle then envisions the improvement of the present fragmented, commercial and residential frontage with a series of concentrated mixed-use activity nodes linked by continuous transportation corridor with nice streetscape and residential along it. The different levels of activity nodes will promote pedestrian activity and business vitality along the corridor. They also create a rhythm of development along the corridor, which helps to segment the linear corridor into distinct areas; each of these areas has the potential to develop its own sense of place.

Figure 1. 2 String of Pearls Principle

